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ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

Official Publication of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English

Vol. 42, No. 7

Urbana, Illinois

April, 1955

Published every month except June, July, August, and September. Subscription price, \$2.00 per year; single copies, 25 cents. *Entered as second-class matter October 29, 1941, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.* Communications may be addressed to J. N. Hook, 121 Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Illinois.

Some of the Best Prose Written in Illinois High Schools in 1954

Selected by HELEN STAPP, assisted by other
English teachers of Decatur High School

CALORIE COUNTING A WEIGHTY BUSINESS

The Stone age, Bronze age, and Iron age have all left their contributions to history. But it looks as if Americans are embarked upon the most interesting of all—the Calorie age!

Advertisers, fashion designers, movie stars, exerting their usual influence upon the public, have added a new term to the household dictionary. For the word *calorie* was formerly used chiefly by sophomore biology students, nutrition experts, or dieting females.

Americans, in a word, have become weight-conscious! Our nation may not be the oldest or the wisest, but at least we'll produce the thinnest people.

The adage that a fat person is a happy person is now looked upon with disdain. Instead, he is referred to as disillusioned, disappointed, neurotic, anything but contented.

Housewives don't bring just the shopping list to market any more. The calorie chart goes right along. And from the grocery shelves, leer at the shopper such startling statements as calorie controlled, low in calories, dietetic. These hateful words jump from every can, bag, box, and bottle in the store.

As I reluctantly push the chocolate layer cake away and slowly reach for the Rye-Krisp, I contemplate my emaciated form and decide that Fatso may be frustrated but at least he has fun at it!

JUDY EBERT, the Immaculata H. S., '55
Sister Mary Alician, B.V.M., teacher

WHY I AM SLOWLY GOING CRAZY

Children seem to fall into two classifications: the sweet, angelic type and the kind I babysit with.

For instance, take the case of dear Patty and Jerry Perkins. I arrived anticipating an evening of rest and relaxation, for I had been here only once before, while the children were sleeping. But not so this time. Mrs. Perkins greeted me at the door. "I won't be going for a while," she said, "The children are in the living room."

I walked in and immediately staggered back under the impact of a large beach-ball. Taking this in my stride, I picked up the beach-ball and re-entered the room. Mrs. Perkins introduced me to the two darlings.

Patty seemed to be fashioned along the lines of a broken phonograph record, for her conversation ran something like this: "Give me back my beach-ball, Jean. I want my beach-ball. Give me back my beach-ball. Do you want to play catch with my beach-ball? You give me my beach-ball. Please play catch with my beach-ball. Give me back my beach-ball. I want my beach-ball."

I gave her back her beach-ball.

Mrs. Perkins started for her room, calling after her, "Jerry can undress himself, but you had better help Patty."

Jerry disappeared into his bedroom, and I followed Patty into hers. There, among a bewildering disarray, were her pajamas. They were undoubtedly conceived in the mind of a mad genius, and consisted of one piece of red flannel, with a trap door behind, rows of buttons that won't button in front, and a piece of polka-dotted material fondly supposed to be a clown's ruff.

After much coaxing and pleading I engineered Patty into an upright position and proceeded to disrobe her. Patty gave no help whatsoever. Her line was a sort of passive resistance. While I pulled and tugged, she stood stock still, making me raise her arms, lift her chin up or down, and generally move her like a puppet.

After a struggle that took ten years off my life, I got her clothes off. Then came those infernal pajamas. Pull and tug as I might, I couldn't get them on correctly. Arms and elbows stuck out in every direction, her head bobbed in and out of the pajamas, but I could not slide her into the right place.

But, being a resourceful girl, I finally got little Patty into her pajamas. Just then her mother peeked in and said, "Oh, Patty can get undressed and put her pajamas on by herself. You only need to button and unbutton her clothes."

I will pass over some of the more painful details of the evening, such as Jerry's playing his clarinet in a manner both ear-splitting and nerve-jangling, and go on to what I term "the recreation hour."

Jerry and Patty didn't want to go to bed yet and their mother graciously gave permission for them to play a game of "Cootie" before going to bed. They decided they needed a third party for the game, and they decided on me as the other player.

All went fairly well until Patty began to take four or five turns at a time. I started to protest, but Jerry silenced me with a look. "It's Patty's turn," he said.

Well, I showed Jerry who was master then. He was.

Then I missed a turn by mistake. This irked Jerry. He looked at me malevolently and slowly pronounced the word, "Fatso."

I rose in fond hope of strangling him but held myself back, knowing that although the mother would probably be oblivious to my dying groans, any slight squeal from her precious pets would bring her out on the run.

We finally finished the game. (I came in third.) The children frisked gaily off to bed, while I staggered behind, loaded to the teeth with their toys.

Jerry said his prayer with the speed of Native Dancer coming into the home stretch, but Patty's prayer was no such easy matter. All she had to say was the customary, "Now I lay me down to sleep," but it took her five minutes to say it, for she was giggling hysterically. As she ended the ordeal with a muffled "Amen," I asked, "What, Patty, is so funny?"

"You look so funny," she giggled.

I shouldn't have asked.

Now I don't want you to get the idea that I don't like babysitting, but there really must be an easier way to make a living.

JEAN DOBBERT, Naperville Com. H. S., '57
Laura Wolverton, teacher

A LONG TIME

Getting up from the couch, yawning and stretching, Sue exclaimed, "I'm going out for some fresh air, Mom. I'll go see how Tiffy and Buster are getting along in their new barn. I sure hope Tiff doesn't kick the window out as she did in the other barn. Do you want me to take the dogs out?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because they'll try to go back home, or to our used-to-be home. Besides, your dad has already taken them out once tonight. I really don't think you ought to go out. After all, it's going on nine o'clock, and it's really getting cold. It's supposed to get down to 15° tonight," answered her mother.

"Oh, I'll put a lot of clothes on," explained Sue lightly, covering up her impatience. "Anyway," she continued, "I have to check the barn door. If Tiffy should get out, she would break her neck. You know how crazy she acts when she gets scared. I sure hope she grows out of that."

"Well, if you want to go out in this nasty weather, I guess it's up to you," said her mother, giving her the permission to go.

As Sue started up the stairs, she half-way turned and looked down into the room. Her nine-year-old sister was sitting directly in front of the television set, eyes held wide in fear for her beloved Captain Video.

"It seems as if Captain Video is always in a tough spot. Oh, well, he and Lynda are the only familiar things around here," Sue thought.

Opening the barn door, Sue stepped in and breathed deeply, taking in the aroma of saddle soap, fresh hay, and a strong smell of leather. To her they smelled good. The barn was small, just enough room for two large stalls, a place to store hay and grain, and a place for her saddles, bridles, and other equipment. This barn was about the same size as the one where she used to live, so Sue felt comfortable in it.

Inside one stall was Buster, a pony not over eleven or twelve hands high. The pony had big brown eyes which glistened in the dim light. His only white marking was a round spot on the tip of his nose. His ears were short and stubby, and when he looked at Sue, they stood straight up, coming to a peak and pointing at her. He had the traditional long hair of the Shetland, which gave him the appearance of an overgrown dog.

In the stall next to Buster was Tiffeny, a young mare about sixteen hands high. Sue stepped into her stall and just stood there, taking in every detail about her horse. From the large brown, almost red, spots to the big blue eyes Tiffy was a horse to gain your attention. Blue eyes in a horse are very unusual. Horsemen call them glass eyes because they are so beautiful and perfect looking. Sue lovingly let her gaze glide over the smooth muscular body to the ears, one brown, the other white, and finally to the small,

intelligent head. She noticed the long brown hairs that mingled in with the white of Tiff's foretop and how it tapered to a point between her eyes, setting off the wide forehead and slim delicate muzzle. She reached out to straighten it.

When angered, Tiff would press her ears flat against her head, blue eyes rolling and flashing and white teeth protruding from snarled lips, making her even more beautiful. But, of course, Sue hated to see her like this because it spelled danger.

Moving quickly, Sue started currying and brushing Tiff, talking to her as she progressed. To this thirteen-year-old girl this was her own private world that nobody could share, a refuge from a sometimes cruel life. Here she could talk to her horse without fear of a sarcastic remark—or any remark.

Looking down, Sue saw that large balls of snow had packed up in Tiff's hoofs, holding rocks and weeds pressed against the frog or inside of the hoof. She knew this made it very painful for the horse to walk, so she got a knife and started digging it out. It was a very tiresome job because she had to hold the foot with one hand and dig the snow out with the other. It also kept her on guard all the time for fear of injuring the inside of the hoof.

Sue completed the two front feet without any difficulty. Walking to the hind feet, she glanced around to Tiffy's head, and panic shot through her. The mare's ears were pressed flat against her head, and she was looking at Sue with wild, rolling blue eyes. Her tail was swishing as if brushing off flies. Her whole position showed she was ready to kick out with both hind feet. Sue knew if she did kick, she wouldn't have a chance. She would be lucky to get out with her life.

Sizing up the situation in a few seconds, Sue immediately started talking—a low, steady stream of words that had only one meaning. "If I can only keep her still until I can reach the head," thought Sue, "out of range of those innocent-looking hoofs that could mean death."

Sue started moving inch by inch toward Tiff's head. She wanted to scream, to run, do anything but move slowly, but she couldn't, and she knew it. A quick movement, a sudden jerk, could startle Tiffy, and she would lash out with both hind feet, straight at Sue. So Sue continued her heart-breaking pace between the barn wall and Tiff.

The pony stomping his feet, blowing and snorting; the swish of fast-moving tires on a wet highway, speeding by, then slowly fading away; and the slight sound of slow, sliding feet, accom-

panied by a low, steady murmur of words, low but reassuring—these were the only sounds heard in the cozy little barn. Then the sound of a fall against the barn wall and a long—low—sigh of relief. Sue had made it to her excited horse's head!

Her hands felt cold, but they were wet with perspiration. It rolled down her forehead, stinging in her eyes. It seemed as if she had rubber joints, for her legs had trouble holding her. She wanted to go into the house, lie down, and feel warm and safe and dry. But she knew she couldn't. If she didn't face and master her horse now, she would always be afraid, and the horse would realize it. There had to be a conclusion. Either Sue would lose her courage and give up or try until she got the job done.

Glancing back at those hoofs, Sue thought of all the strength they possessed. A moment ago they were the difference between life and death. "I wonder what in the world is the matter with her," thought Sue. "She wasn't doing it from meanness. It looked to me as if she were afraid I was going to hurt her. Maybe I hurt a sore or a scar or something. But I don't remember touching her after I had finished the front feet."

Still arguing with her thoughts, Sue started unconsciously talking and petting Tiffy, trying to work up her courage. Just for a second she hesitated, and then walked all around the horse, keeping one hand on her all the time, letting it slide along her haunches, and along the other side. Tiffy followed Sue with her eyes but showed no sign of again becoming dangerous, just a sort of scared anticipation. Recognizing her fear, Sue looked for some sort of injury. It was then that she noticed the large welts across Tiffy's back.

"Either someone has been beating her or something has fallen on her," Sue thought angrily. "Wait a minute. That large limb that the wind blew off the old oak tree. I wonder. Could Tiffy have been under it?" reasoned Sue. "No, that couldn't be. Her back would be broken if she had been. But still—. I know, I'll go look! There ought to be some kind of tracks."

Peering down between the branches on the broken limb, Sue flashed her light on the ground under the branches. "Oh, there's what I'm looking for. Tiffy's tracks. She *was* under this when it broke. It's a good thing the heaviest part didn't hit her, or she'd have a broken back." Frightening thoughts ran through Sue's head of what could have happened. Then she thought about how Tiffy distrusted her now.

"She probably thinks some *person* hit her," thought Sue. "That's the trouble with horses. Every time they get hurt, they think somebody sneaked up on them, hit them, and then disappeared. I wish Tiffy would get wise and find out that I'm not the only thing that ever hurts her. Oh, well," sighed Sue, "I can't change her so I'll just have to show her I'm not intending to hurt her. I hope I can do it."

Talking and rubbing Tiffy around the ears, knowing that she loved this, Sue tried regaining the horse's confidence. She tried picking up one of the hind feet, swallowing her fear as she did so. Tiffy roughly jerked the foot out of her hands, but Sue started in again with grim determination.

Thirty minutes later a tired but successful Sue had finished both hoofs. She was glad Tiffy had finally submitted to her will.

Picking up the knife, brush, and curry, Sue put them away, snapped off the light, and started to the house.

The night was silent except for an occasional swish of a car on the highway. Stopping and placing her hands on her hips, she took a big—long—deep breath of the cold crystal-clear air and looked about her. How strange the night seemed! Almost like a beautiful dream. The stars were very clear and bright, and the snow spread a brightness through the dark, casting eerie shadows and making them into beautiful dancing figures. It seemed as though an invisible shield had been placed around the land, preserving it for a few minutes from ever-changing Mother Nature.

Breaking the almost reverent spell, Sue continued walking to the house, with the crunch of snow under her feet.

Opening the door, Sue shouted, "I'm back!"

"You sound as if you've been gone for a long time," her mother replied, not looking up.

"That's funny," Sue thought, "I feel as if I *have* been gone for a long time. It seems like a year ago that I told Mother I was going outside. Oh, well, I might as well not tell Mother about it. She would just bawl me out for taking chances and not calling Dad to help me."

She sat down by her sister, who was still watching TV, and was immediately interested in a mystery.

SANDRA FORD, Centennial Jr. H. S., Decatur, '58
Helen Hunsinger, teacher

WHAT FREEDOM IN AMERICA MEANS TO ME

Before me sits a box—a plain brown cardboard box. Contained in it are a multitude of tiny things. Each one symbolizes some part of our freedom here in America. Let me explain myself.

This shiny silver bell looks too small to mean anything; but it stands for a great freedom. It reminds me of the bells in the church down the street. I had a choice of any church in the United States, but I chose this one, not because of its majestic steeples or imported windows, but because I believe what is taught there. All over America, people are choosing their own religion—free from fear.

I remember this old paper doll. It was given to me by Rebecca, a little Jewish girl. I played with her and Greta and Carmen all the time. There was no such thing as a “foreigner” in our neighborhood. Childhood without prejudice—what a wonderful memory!

A key is a small thing, but it holds a lot of meaning. The one I have in my box was used to protect my most coveted childhood gift. Every night I would unlock my jewelry box and gaze for a moment at the carved silver bracelet lying there. That same key now symbolizes for me all the things that I, as an American, can own, privately and freely.

This rusty old tin whistle tells an eloquent story of courage and helpfulness. It belonged to a very old and very dear friend of mine, the corner policeman. Always on guard, always smiling and friendly, he symbolized for me everything kind and strong. He was always the efficient policeman, but first he was the understanding helper. I was always free to ask him any question, and he was always willing to answer.

An old newspaper clipping captioned “VOTE” is next. This item speaks for itself. When I go to the polls in a few years, it will be with the idea that I am voting for the man who seems to be best qualified for the job. I will have no qualms about the outcome of the election for I will have done my duty as a citizen. I will vote—freely!

A strand of tinsel and a piece of colored egg-shell—these are eloquent symbols of our American holidays. Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, each one stands for some belief, beliefs to which I have a right as an American citizen.

My box is empty now, but before me are laid my freedoms; freedom to love and serve my God and my country; freedom to live in peace with myself and my neighbor. This is what freedom in America means to me!

BARBARA TEBOCKHORST, Alleman H. S., '56
Sister M. Eleanor, teacher

CADENCE

I couldn't write the essay. The prize attached was enticing enough—most enticing, in fact. But if I'd written those thousand words, I would have seen a story my mother loves to tell dancing along between the lines with its "i's" staring accusingly at me. It's an anecdote about a little Jewish boy who entered an essay contest on "The World's Greatest Man." He wrote about Jesus. When the teacher, puzzled at his choice, asked him why, he told her he knew it would win the prize for him. It did.

I couldn't write that "Civil Defense is necessary to protect our Democracy from the holocaust of atomic war," a nice, typical, empty generality. I couldn't get excited over the mental picture of babes in arms or greying grandmas pricking up their ears to the drone of enemy planes that the pamphlet so neatly suggested. I couldn't because this is "What Civil Defense Means to Me":

Two years ago I went to an organizational meeting of a teenage group that was really needed in the community: the Civil Air Patrol. It was needed because the community, an infant among towns, hadn't begun to worry much about the gangs of younger teens who could be heard racing bikes or motor scooters along the streets, and who could be identified in the dusk only by the shower of sparks from a stub smashed to the pavement. In an old farm house on the edge of town, literature describing the C. A. P. program was distributed, and the Fir, Elm, and Indianwood streets were left quiet and empty.

I wish I had some of that brochure to show you. It told of lessons in first-aid, meteorology, map-interpreting, mechanics, radio, and even flying. It explained its service to the nation in plane-spotting, and it proved its peace-time purpose by examples of aid in accident, flood, and fire in various sections of the country. I "went up" twice. The first-aid and meteorology classes were moving along with the students far more captivated as they sat on the dusty furniture in the farm house than they'd ever been in an ordinary classroom.

Then things began to happen. We became a recognized unit. Before long, half of the group showed up in khaki. Scraps indicating various ranks appeared on sleeves. Simultaneously, the rifles arrived—dummies, of course. A short wave set was installed, and an old wreck of a plane was purchased and heaped in the living room. Soon after, we were told there would be no more meteorology classes; instead we would learn radio. Our first-aid instructor got impatient and assigned more chapters than we could

possibly absorb. I won't name him, because he soon administered an open-book first-aid exam, and I've a sneaking suspicion that wasn't quite legal. The art of administering to wounds was replaced by the preliminary to giving them: rifle drill.

Verbal Cadence of some sort is the secret of the youth groups. In C. A. P. it was the click-click-click-smack! of "Present . . . arms!" Unless you've been under its spell, you can't understand its hypnotic effect. I came late to a meeting one night (a deed punishable by ten demerits). After creaking up the staircase I stood in the doorway of what had once been the master bedroom. The faded flowers of peeling paper looked down on the spectacle of my brown-shirted friends marching in a line across the floor, their blank faces staring from under enameled helmets, their hands, sweating from the warmth of an over-heated oil burner, clutching the butts of rifles. I mentally blanked out the faded roses, and an old picture in my history book rose before me. That was my last meeting.

All right, you say, those were just emotional adolescents. Yes, but the adult leaders were men and women. *They* didn't march; they called the steps. The last I heard, they'd added jujitsu—to handle Russian paratroopers, I suppose. If only people could do something without becoming addicts. If they could watch for planes without wanting to shoot them down in person, then civilians might have a place in defense. If they can't, then leave it to men who know how to control emotions. Leave it to the U. S. Army.

MARGARET BENNETT, Bloom Twp. H. S., '55
Wm. Shroyer, teacher

SWIMMING WITH THE SHARKS

One nice hot afternoon in one of Florida's bays, Rod and I were out in our outboard skiff having some fun with a small ironing board that we had converted into an aquaplane. I was on the aquaplane, lying down with my long legs dragging in the water behind, when I noticed a big black fin appear right next to me. The boat was going slowly and Rod was not paying any attention to me at all, but was gazing off into the distance.

I screamed in a horrified voice, "Help!"

Rod turned around quickly. When he saw the fin, he yelled, "You and your life hang on. We're gonna have some gymnastics!"

The ironing board was not long enough to stand up on, so I

lay there with my legs and feet in the water right next to the shark. My teeth chattered so much that my two false ones came loose.

I shouted, "Don't just sit there and laugh! Put on some speed! Hurry!"

Rod took a curve with an ever-increasing speed. The fin stayed right at my side, picking up speed as I did.

I screamed in a loud, hoarse voice, "Rod, head for the shallows!"

Rod turned and laughingly replied, "Relax, chum, you're in good hands. Reach out and pet the pretty fella."

"Are you crazy?" I exclaimed. "I may lose an arm or leg!"

Laughing harder than ever, Red said, "Reach out and pet it or I'll stop."

I yelled, "Don't stop, you fool. Head for the shallows!"

Red, seeing that I had not attempted to touch the fin, began to slow the boat and the ironing board sank lower and lower into the water. I was so scared that I opened my big mouth, like a garage door opening, but nothing came out. I reached out like lightning and touched the fin. It felt like rough granite sandpaper, but I still could not yell for more speed.

Rod was satisfied with my hurried pat and opened the throttle. We had gone about three feet when the old, trusty motor gave out with a sputter-sput-sput and stopped dead. Rod grabbed the spare gas can and, after pouring half a gallon of fuel into the bay, finally got some into the gas tank.

By this time, two fins, instead of one, were circling the boat—and me. I was lying on what seemed to me to be a much too small piece of water-logged stick, slowly submerging.

Rod pulled the starter rope and the motor gurgled, as if too tired to start. My board sank lower as I hung on helplessly. Rod yanked the rope again, and the Elgin roared as we headed for a nearby sandbar that was about six inches under the water.

With one fin on each side of me, in cozy formation, the three of us headed for the shallows. Rod was still laughing, when I saw his usually deep reddish brown face change to a startling sheet white.

When I saw his terrified look, I turned and peered over my shoulder. There I saw another giant black fin with white polka-dots coming up swiftly from the rear. My eyes nearly fell out, and my mouth opened as wide as the Grand Canyon.

Suddenly, the fins beside me dragged to a stop. Looking down, I saw the welcome white sand right under me. Rod cut the motor

and, jumping out of the boat, ran back to me. As he splashed through the shallow water he yelled, "Look!"

I rose to my knees, shaky as a baby's rattle, and turned to follow Rod's pointing finger. The two friendly fins belonged to porpoises and the polka-dotted fin was the top part of a medium sized whale shark.

The two porpoises turned and with natural instinct, rushed their vicious enemy, the shark. The water churned and foamed while Rod and I witnessed one of the great and bitter fights for life in nature.

WILLIAM SHEPARD, Plainfield H. S., '58
Mrs. Pauline Culbertson, teacher

ALONE?

The intense heat of the humid summer afternoon was unbearable, and irate people, loading their cars, were hurrying to the countryside to find relief. The usual midafternoon breeze had deserted the town, and the inhabitants of the city were choking from the heat. A weary, stooped figure stumbled blindly across the street, and the feet automatically turned toward the towering building ahead where the trudging figure was soon enveloped in its purple shadows.

Inside, the cool, refreshing and absolute silence was soothing to her confused mind. It was good to be able to think.

An organist began to practice softly, as though not wanting to disturb the silence, but to blend with it. The music rose and fell, and the strains were beautiful and familiar. None of those worldly sounds could reach inside these immense walls. Something intangible seemed to enclose the silent woman like a cloak.

The tears came now, filling and then overflowing her eyes. Worn, but strong, fine hands groped silently for a handkerchief. She had been dry-eyed at the overpowering news, but now, where no one could see her, she could not keep the tears back.

Soon she stopped weeping and dried her eyes. She felt much better and uttered an inaudible sigh of relief. The music came to her attention again. It wasn't all solemn and majestic, she realized; the piece that filled the air was joyful and made her want to join in and sing. She began to hum softly. She felt at peace with the world and could think clearly. Quietly she knelt and offered a prayer of thanks that He had led her here.

The familiar hymn from the organ ran through her thoughts.

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Her mind went back to a Bible verse she had learned as a child. "Come ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you peace." Could it all be a coincidence? She had found comfort today when she needed it. Now she was convinced that Divine Power had planned everything.

As she arose, her face was filled with beauty that came from peace of mind, and she seemed to have found new strength. The shadows had lengthened, and broad rays of light streamed across the room. It was getting late. She walked slowly toward the door. As she stepped out into the dusk of evening, the sounds of the city reached her, inviting and challenging her to be part of them. She walked forward with confidence, shoulders squared, and looked straight ahead.

CAROLYN PARSONS, Moline Senior H. S., '56
Robert D. Knees, teacher

MURPHY

Murphy is a four-year-old happy-go-lucky Irish setter that joined our family three years ago. His parents were of pedigreed stock, but somehow we got the biggest, the noisiest, and the craziest of the pups.

I'll never forget the first time that I saw Murphy. How could I? I still have the scars to show where he knocked me down with one of his awkward flying leaps. I didn't know whether an elephant had escaped from the zoo, or I had been hit by a Mack truck; but my wounds and my pride healed with time and I soon became attached to Murphy.

Since Irish setters are a well-known type of bird dog, we bought Murphy for the purpose of hunting birds. Hunting birds. Now there's the understatement of the year. The first time that we took him hunting, he pointed twelve squirrels. What's wrong with twelve squirrels? Nothing, except that we had expected him to point birds.

Being very independent, Murphy doesn't permit anyone to tell him when to eat or where. If he's really hungry, he jumps up on the kitchen table and munches everything in sight. We might not mind so much if he were a small dog, but since he weighs close to a hundred pounds, we are soon going to have to declare our table unsafe for human use.

Murphy is usually a well-behaved dog with callers and does not bite. He may taste them, but that is as far as he will go. If a stranger comes into the house, Murphy frequently welcomes him with one of those "get-this-dog-off-my-shoulders" leaps for which he is so famous.

He is really a comical-looking animal. His long ears always swish in his water bowl while he is drinking, and his thick tail is always knocking lamps off end tables or is getting stepped on. His inquisitive nose is accustomed to being in people's business or getting caught in the icebox door.

He loves to stalk around the house and pounce on anything that looks edible. He is particularly fond of golf balls, full spools of thread, chessmen, clothes pins and rubber bands. That dog has eaten enough rubber bands to keep a rubber plantation in business for years.

In the wintertime Murphy lives like a king, often giving up his shag rug for the comforts of my bed. He waits until everyone is asleep and then crawls quietly on my bed and buries himself under my covers. We tried to stop him by putting mouse traps on the bed, but the idea was abandoned because I kept getting my toes caught in the traps.

Murphy loves water and spends the hot summer days in rivers, lagoons, and lakes; but when his bath time comes, his love for water stops. We have three plans that we use to get him into the bath tub. Hoping to trick him, we sometimes strew a path of candy, potato chips, and dog biscuits between the kitchen and the bathroom. This ruse no longer works. When he sees us dropping edible goodies on the floor, he runs under the kitchen table. Our second scheme is to grab him by the neck and drag him into the bathroom, but this method is usually near fatal to the grabber. The third is to jump on him, pick him up, and run with him to the tub and throw him in. When we resort to this procedure, his pride is usually injured and he sulks for the rest of the day. Once his majesty's bath is finished, the bathroom is a complete mess. The floor, walls, and ceiling are splattered with soapsuds, and red hair clings to the tub. Of course, the washer is wetter than the dog.

Isn't there an old saw to the effect that you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Well, in Murphy's case, it's different. We can't teach him any tricks. Oh, yes, we did manage to teach him the give-me-your-paw trick, which achievement we are all sorry for now. Have you ever been quietly watching television with a big bowl of ice cream in your lap when all at once from nowhere a huge paw lashes out and knocks the ice cream all over you, the chair, and the rug? Well, if you haven't, I advise you to forego teaching your dog that trick.

I guess there just won't be a dull day around our house with a crazy mixed-up setter like Murphy running around, but since there are no insane asylums for dogs, it looks as if we'll have to stick it out with Murphy for a while longer. From what I have said, you probably think that the family would give Murph away willingly. Confidentially, we wouldn't give him up for all the oil in Texas.

WAYNE ZABIN, Maine Twp. H. S., Des Plaines, Ill., '56
Paulene M. Yates, teacher

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

The night is clear and cool. A thousand tiny, sparkling stars light the cloudless, black sky as if a diamond necklace had been carelessly tossed onto a soft, downy blanket. On the ground lie clean, smooth layers of new-fallen snow. Tall awkward trees spread their bare snow-laden limbs toward heaven. The white snow reflects the sparkle of the stars, and the trees shine with small, flashing lights. An almost eerie silence reigns.

A cold, lonely feeling glides over the land like a cool breeze, stirring up the past and forgotten dreams. It is Christmas eve, but something is missing. Not a whisper is heard. The cool breeze does not carry the sound of sweet young voices singing carols and gaily laughing. It does not waft the scent of roasting turkey and baking potatoes. The tall trees do not glitter with bright ornaments and tinsel. There are no holly wreaths, no red candles, no gifts from Santa Claus.

No, nothing of Christmas is seen, heard, or smelled in this place. It is Christmas eve in the year 2000 A.D. Man with his science has eliminated himself. There is no Christmas this silent night. There are no men.

SUE ERTSWOLD, Maine Twp. H. S., '55
Elizabeth Parolini, teacher

THE STORM

A flash of light closely followed by a loud clap of thunder foretells the rapidly rising storm. Overcast skies have already darkened the world about you. An instinct dating back to the beginning of man urges you to quicken your pace as a feeling of fear flows through your body. Wind whipping through the trees overhead casts weird, frightening shadows that seem to dance to the whistling music of Satan.

For an instant the blackness of the storm is broken by a terrifying brightness from the heavens. A lurking, threatening form appears behind every tree. Fear has terrified your very soul. Running now, hardly feeling the pellets of driving rain cutting into your face, you can dimly make out lights ahead. They mean safety—safety from nature's raging battle of the elements. Stumbling blindly along the muddy road you are a fighting animal whose wild uncontrollable mind desires only warmth and protection from nature's freakish grasp. Panting, trembling, you reach the door and throw yourself inside.

The sudden quietness of the house snaps you back to reality. The trembling slowly subsides. The sound of the rain, faintly heard against the roof and windows, creates a lonely, peaceful feeling. But the noise is deceiving for, outside, the blinding storm still rages on.

DOM RAINO, Joliet Twp. H. S., '56
Catherine M. Adler, teacher

THE CITY

It is morning in The City: a cool, still August morning. It is early, for the air is still and cool and few are going about the streets. The sun is beginning to rise to the east of The City. First it is just an orange glow on the horizon. Then it changes to a great red fireball against a backdrop of skyscrapers reaching like fingers of concrete and steel.

The air is getting warmer now. The milkman and the newspaper boy are making their rounds. The policeman is coming in from his beat. Above the streets the elevated is beginning to whine and groan on its huge spiderweb network of steel, carrying millions of people to work. But it is early yet. The City is still not fully awake.

Now the air has become hot and humid. That penetrating smell of chlorine and marsh gas is becoming more evident. Every morning it rises once again from the open sewage canals like a great monster to torment people. The odor never completely vanishes; it just becomes a little less evident. Even during the winter months it is present.

Now, The City has sprung to life! People are on the streets everywhere. The great crescendo in the symphony of concrete and steel is in progress. This is it! The big town! The golden town! See it while you can! Hear the excited chatter of the people in the streets. Heartbreak for some, success for others. Hear the symphony of The City and remember it. For once you hear it, you never forget it.

JOHN HEWITT, Evanston Twp. H. S., '55
Charlotte Whittaker, teacher

A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

My code of ethics surpasses all others because it is God's code. His lawbook is just as real today as it was two thousand years ago, and it still can solve any problem. The Author of this book is infinite, perfect, so powerful that man cannot begin to comprehend His greatness.

Everyone wants to be popular, to have lots of friends. But friends alone can never bring real happiness, nor can money, although both are necessary for a well-balanced life. Their enjoyment lasts for a season, but with the passing of that season, only an emptiness remains. There is a Friend, however, who stays with the sorrowing, who can be turned to in need, and who can give a lasting happiness. The true riches He has supplied already—a setting sun on a crystal cool lake, a sea of wheat waving in the breeze, a child's laughter.

There is no frustration in my life, no fears or anxieties. I am not in doubt as to what the future will hold, nor do I have to guess as to what is right, what my relationships with others should be, or my destination after my stay on earth. Death seems only an experience that must be encountered before a far greater home can be reached.

KAREN KUNCL, J. Sterling Morton H. S., '56
Paul L. Kiser, teacher

THOUGHTS ON THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE

"If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, if we imbue them with principles, with just fear of God and love of our fellow men, we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten to all eternity."

Daniel Webster

The beautiful and yet so true and down-to-earth quotation which Jesse Stuart chose to preface his book *The Thread That Runs So True* is certainly worth remembering. Daniel Webster's words are precise, intelligent and worldly, and yet the thoughts behind them ring clear and true in this world of hesitation and uncertainty.

It matches Stuart's own thoughts and goals. Why would a young man choose to be a teacher in a poorly equipped and extremely small and out of the way country school? No one with only money in mind would ever become a teacher in the first place, much less considering that the first grade included big, burly fellows, older than their teacher.

Training the minds of people is the most important thing in this world. Uneducated people seldom possess or understand the things that are required of leaders of civilization.

Most people are happier if they have some knowledge of this world we live in than if they remained ignorant for all of their lives. Jesse Stuart wanted to help people. And he did.

Mr. Webster spoke of brass and marble as temporary, unlasting things. Perhaps they remain solid and strong for centuries —how can that be "unlasting"? Man can destroy buildings, mountains, stone—almost anything; in fact, he has the dubious honor of being able to destroy more than he can create. But the intelligence of a person's mind is an immortal and lasting thing. The idols and statues of the world will crumble to nothingness, while the holy light of knowledge will show the way to civilization 'til the end of time.

When Mr. Stuart compared education with "The thread that runs so true" and the teacher as "The needle's eye," he meant that without a teacher—someone to guide, help and offer his knowledge —there could be no learning. One person, in this world from infancy by himself, would be a strange being indeed. Education is the running thread of civilization—it is delicate and yet strong—we must fight to preserve it. In comparison to Webster's statement, Mr. Stuart was a very fine example of a good teacher.

SHARRY SIMERL, Urbana H. S., '58
Mrs. Enid Olson, teacher

MEET THE FAMILY

I would be proud to have anyone meet my family.

First of all, meet my dad.

He is a local physician and surgeon. That takes up most of his time but somehow, in his quiet and understanding way, he always finds a way to show the family his work isn't everything. He is a talented pianist and has a love for flowers and gardening. Dad taught biology and also coached at the high school in Pipestone, Minnesota. As a result of his numerous interests we have roses in our garden, a grand piano in the living room, and the telephone ringing constantly.

Meet my mom.

She is about the most wonderful mother a girl could have. Before Mom and Dad were married, she taught English and dramatics in the same high school my dad did, in Pipestone, Minnesota. Just as my dad loves his piano, my mother loves her library. She belongs to various clubs, but actually she spends most of her time wiping up spilled milk. The Lord blessed Mom with a marvelous sense of humor, which she constantly puts to use. She needs to, with three girls who she says someday will make a ladies' wrestling team. As long as I've known Mom (that's thirteen wonderful years) she has been an excellent mother as I'm sure she will always be.

And now meet Susan.

Sue, a four-year-old, is a cross between Hitler and Florence Nightingale. One minute she's a devil, and the next she practically sprouts wings. I think she may grow up to be a nurse. The illnesses of my Dad's patients fascinate her. Right now she has a passionate interest for drawing pictures of people with huge heads, and boxes for hands and feet. Many of her little friends are going to school, and naturally she is envious. We have registered her for dancing lessons. She tells everyone that is her school. She is noisy and boisterous, and there's always something doing when Sue is around.

Last, but not least, meet Peggy.

We were all relieved to discover when Peg arrived, two years ago, that she was a docile, agreeable child. (No household could stand two Susies!) Peggy is a pudgy little girl, who constantly lugs around a pile of books or toys as she trudges after her older friends. Right now she is quiet and sweet; but, as time goes on, I'm beginning to realize that it won't be too long until she, too, interrupts my theme-writing, as Susie so enthusiastically does now.

We have had no pets in the family since I fed a stray cat, two years ago. She had twelve kittens in five months, and that was the end of that!

Our family has lots of fun. One of the most enjoyable times we spend together is our annual fishing trip in Minnesota. We fish avidly from "dawn 'til dusk" and then play cards far into the night.

I believe in most respects we are like any other American family.

Yes, I would be proud to have anyone meet my family.

SALLY MOORE, Streator Twp. H. S., '57
Lucille M. Tkach, teacher

ONE PITCH

Pitcher versus batter—the eternal duel of baseball! Now you're part of it. The announcer had said, "Number twenty-nine, now batting for the pitcher." That's you! What you do determines the game. There are teammates on second and third base with two outs. Your team is losing three to two in the bottom of the ninth inning. Your single will win the ball game, if you hit it.

But wait! Get that uneasiness out of your mind. The pitcher is just as nervous as you are. The pressure is on him too. You must remember that, or else you will be struck out before you reach the plate.

You step into the batter's box and nervously shift your spikes in the dirt. You do this not to make a foothold but to loosen your tense muscles. The fans in the far away stands hush, sensing the importance of this batter. The infielders shout words of encouragement to the pitcher, and you know your teammates on the bench are trying to encourage you or to rattle the pitcher.

The umpire signals that he is ready. The catcher sets himself and gives the sign to the pitcher. The pitcher receives the sign and steps on the rubber. Everyone is ready—except you. You know you will never be ready; you don't know what to be ready for. That is how pitchers survive—keeping the batters off balance by using their heads along with their arms.

Then comes the first pitch, a slider low and outside, ball one! Now you are ahead of the pitcher. He will try to pitch a strike. He may try a little too hard and let up on it just a slight bit. That's

what you'll be waiting for, that one pitch with which you can really connect.

Now the pitcher is ready. He winds up and fires a blazing fastball low and inside. It is just fast enough to catch you off balance so you just catch a piece of it. The sound of the crowd tells you, as you run toward first, that the ball is foul, out of play in the stands.

One and one, one ball and on strike, "even up" as some would say. But not really even, for the pitcher is still able to throw a pitch of which he isn't quite certain. He can afford to throw two more balls while one strike puts the batter in the hole.

The next pitch floats in, a change of pace; you are tempted to swing, but at the last minute you hold up to let it sail inside for a ball. Two and one. Once again you're ahead of the pitcher.

The pitcher goes through a quick wind-up, but you step out of the box to get a handful of dirt.

"That-a-boy, make him wait!" comes floating from the manager, standing in the coach's box seemingly miles away down the third base line.

Here comes the two and one pitch, a hook, breaking down and out just before it reaches the plate. As the umpire says, "Strike two," you turn around towards him. But halfway around you stop. Despite the boos of the home crowd you know the umpire called it right. Well, you got a tough break on that one, but it still counts as a strike.

Two and two. The pitcher gets the sign and winds up. He delivers the pitch. In the space of less than a half second that it takes the ball to reach the plate you must decide where that pitch will be when it crosses the plate and therefore whether to swing or to hold up. You watch the pitch curve over the outside corner a little high for ball three.

Three and two, a full count. Now the payoff pitch. On that pitch will ride the outcome of two and a half hours' effort by the players, managers, and coaches of both teams. The next pitch might even determine the final results of a whole season of play. Someone has to lose. Will it be you?

The pitcher takes his time getting ready to pitch since everything will depend on the next pitch. Both pitcher and batter try to guess what the other is thinking, each one probing for the one weakness that will decide the ball game.

You try to remember everything you know about the opposing pitcher. What will he throw when he's in a jam? A curve? No, he knows you are one of the few players who can hit curve balls

well. A knuckle ball? Never! He can't control it. A fastball? That's the pitch he'll use—a fastball low and inside. Wait! You know you shouldn't try to outguess the pitcher. But what else could he throw? "Well, I'll be ready for anything," you say.

The pitcher finally winds up. The right arm, moving slowly at first, speeds up until, as it passes his shoulder, it is a whip with every muscle and nerve in his whole body working to guide the ball true on its path to the plate. Now the ball is hurtling toward you high and hard, the pitch to hit. You swing, listening for the crack of horsehide upon wood which means a solid hit—the crack that never comes.

As you complete your swing, the full impact hits you. You've struck out! Fooled by a knuckler that the pitcher was never supposed to throw! He gambled and won. For every winner there is a loser. That's you.

WESLEY HARPER, Evanston Twp. H. S., '57
Edith L. Baumann, teacher

DEATH OF A DOG

I have no idea how long I sat there in the veterinarian's waiting room. It may have been one hour, maybe three. I don't know. I didn't even bother to look at the old grandfather's clock that chimed at regular intervals, momentarily breaking the silence that pounded against my eardrums.

Suddenly the bells on the front door tinkled, and in walked a tall heavy-set woman carrying a basket. It's strange, but I can still see that basket so clearly. It was wicker with a light blue ribbon tied around it, and as she walked by I caught a glimpse of the occupant's fuzzy black fur. The woman walked straight across the room to the receptionist's desk. The two of them talked in low voices, so low that I couldn't hear what they were saying. I didn't care either. Silly old cat! Silly old woman for that matter! Probably she'd just fed it too much. How could she make such a fuss about a cat that probably wasn't even very sick when my dog was in there dying? How absurd! A blue ribbon! Sometimes I . . . Oh well, it was none of my business if she wanted to tie a blue ribbon around her cat's basket.

I turned away and looked out the window. It was a lazy summer afternoon, and the sun was streaming in the open window,

making the dust particles sparkle. Far up the street I heard the crack of a baseball bat followed by shouting. Two little girls with taffy-colored pigtails whizzed by on their roller skates, laughing as they went.

But there was no joy or happiness in my heart. The world had looked black and gloomy since that morning when Freckles, my fawn-spotted Dalmatian, came staggering through the tangle of palmettos and underbrush behind the garage. Seeing from the kitchen window that something was wrong, I had dashed out of the house and reached his side. Whimpering, he had collapsed at my feet. At first I thought he had been poisoned. "No doubt old Mr. Greenwich did it," I presumed. I knew he hated Freckles, but I didn't think he would dare to take such drastic measures. Then I saw it! His front leg was swollen, and just above the joint were two little marks. Snake bite! Fear clutched my heart. "No, no, it can't be," I kept saying to myself. But it was. I had recognized it when I first saw it, but I couldn't make myself admit it.

Blindly I ran into the house to tell Doc Brenner I was on the way. Vaguely I remember lifting the dog into the car and backing down the long pine needle-covered driveway. I sped to the doctor's, breaking all traffic regulations; and when I arrived there, Doc was waiting to take over. I was left to await the outcome alone while Doc worked under the glaring lights of his operating room.

Why didn't he hurry? I'd been sitting there so long, it seemed. I thought of asking the nurse if she knew what was happening, but I was almost afraid to. Then the door opened, and a figure in white motioned me to follow. I arose, as if in a dream, walked through the door, and went down a long corridor. The smell of ether made me a little dizzy. He turned into a room, and again I followed him. I wanted to ask the dreaded question, but I didn't have to. As he started to leave the room, he answered my unasked question thus: "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid he won't make it." His words fell on me with a crushing blow. I wanted to cry out, "Well, do something. Isn't there anything more you can do? You can't just let him die." But finally the awful truth dawned on me that he had already done everything possible.

As I walked over to the table on which Freckles lay and sat down on the stool beside it, I began to wonder what I would ever do without him. Of course, I had had other dogs before, and perhaps I'd have another, one day. But there would never be another Freckles.

He was such a clown! I remembered the day he had sat on the front lawn under the holly bush contentedly chewing something

At first, I had thought it was only a bone, but finally my curiosity got the best of me and I went out to investigate. I opened his mouth and what do you think fell out? Much to my surprise, I saw a huge pink piece of bubble gum. On the way into the house, I tossed it into some bushes. A little while later I walked by the front window, and there stretched out on the grass was Freckles chewing his bubble gum and grinning from ear to ear.

I'll never forget the summer mornings when we got up with the sun and went down to the beach for a swim. He would run on ahead; and if I didn't follow fast enough, he would come rushing back to me at express train speed, skid to a stop in front of me, wheel in his tracks, and be off again in a flash. When he reached the water's edge, he would stand there statue-like, sniffing the wind and waiting for me to catch up. Almost always the water was calm and as blue as the sky above. It was always cold too, so very cold. But we didn't mind. . . . Sometimes, if we were lucky, we saw the porpoises playing out beyond the pier. As they swam along in single file, they seemed to be playing follow-the-leader. First one would come to the surface with the sun glistening on his sleek gray back, flip his mighty tail, and disappear into the depths of the bay. Then several others followed this same procedure until they tired of their game and headed back out into the open water.

I also remembered the times Melody and I had ridden along the sandy bridle paths with Freckles at her heels. I wondered if Melody would miss him. They were such good pals. . . .

Suddenly the figure on the table stirred, and I took his head in my trembling hands. He whined and licked one of them. At least he recognized me. Then he breathed the deepest sigh I think I have ever heard. That was all. Two salty tears plopped on the cold steel table. I couldn't help them.

JOAN HICKOK, West Senior High, Rockford, '55
Maud E. Weinschenk, teacher

SACRIFICE

The teacher called the roll that day as usual. It was only two weeks till Christmas, and the children were filled with expectations of the wonderful holiday and the joy that was so close at hand.

"Children," the teacher said, "as you know, Christmas isn't very far away, and Christmas, of course, is the time of giving.

Now there are some children here in this school that aren't going to have such a pleasant holiday season. Their parents are poor and can't buy lots of nice toys and clothes for them, and they can't afford a thirty pound turkey. So to help these poor, unfortunate children have a pleasant Christmas, I'm asking you to contribute to a collection being taken up in all the schools so we can buy them new clothes and little toys. Bring your money tomorrow. Thank you."

After class Johnny thought about what the teacher had said.

The next day the teacher called for contributions from the first row. No one brought any. The second, the third, and the fourth rows brought the same results—no money. She called the fifth row. Johnny reached in his pocket and came up with his lunch money. He rose and took it to the teacher. He returned to his seat and meditated quietly on what he had done, but he wasn't sorry.

As the teacher saw him seated there tears came to her eyes—Johnny, the only one who had contributed to help other children. Then she glanced down at the list of children who needed help. Johnny's name was at the top.

JEAN McEVoy, Johns Hill Jr. H. S., '58
Sibyl Garrison, teacher

SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET

by HEINRICH HARRER

Heinrich Harrer's book, *Seven Years in Tibet*, is an action-packed story of seven thrilling but trying years in Tibet, five of those in Lhasa. It relates the struggle of Heinrich Harrer and his companion, Aufschnaiter, against nature and the Tibetan people.

The author's trek was from a British internment camp in India through the Himalayan Mountains to find sanctuary in the "Forbidden City of Lhasa." The Himalayan Mountains, 20,000 feet above sea level, with rarefied air and raging blizzards, reaching 50 degrees below zero centigrade, afforded Harrer few days of pleasure climbing and were a constant challenge to him. However, like a true mountaineer, Harrer momentarily forgot the physical hardships when he beheld the Himalayans . . . "looming ahead like a white capped God."

The second challenge in *Seven Years in Tibet* was the Tibetan fear of what Harrer and Aufschnaiter might do to their country.

"Posing as Indians, with hair and beard dyed black, and skin stained," they tricked the superstitious people and the wary officials in every town along the way. The closer they traveled to Lhasa, however, the easier it became because the people felt that since the strangers had been allowed this far perhaps there was not much to fear from them.

After gaining entrance to Lhasa, an accomplishment practically unheard of, they were cordially welcomed and entertained hospitably by the people. The Lhasa officials tried in vain to send them away but finally let them stay after realizing they would do no harm. Their second year in Lhasa, which was their fourth year in Tibet, Heinrich Harrer became . . . "the confidant of the youthful Dalai Lama . . . loaded with constant gifts . . . and granted complete freedom." They built, while there, a fountain and an irrigation canal. They introduced volley ball, ice-skating, and tennis.

The author of this story does an excellent job of portraying the Tibetan people as they are, simple and happy. Describing his personal feelings about the land itself, Harrer writes, "Wherever I live, I shall feel homesick for Tibet. I often think I can still hear the wild cries of geese and cranes and the beating of their wings as they fly over Lhasa in the clear cold moonlight."

RICHARD OAKES, Naperville H. S., '55
Leona McBride, teacher

A LONG RIDE

The strong breeze blowing around me caused my hands to tighten about the bar I was already gripping securely.

The sky was light blue with little, white puffs of clouds scattered across it. I hadn't noticed the sky since morning when I had thought what a fine day it would be for the annual picnic at Riverview.

Form my vantage point atop the two-hundred and fifty foot pair-a-chute, I could see the entire park. During the ride you are drawn up, are released at the top, and float down. But why didn't I start? Probably once in five years something goes wrong and someone gets marooned up there. The machinery got stuck while I was at the top, and I became the someone.

A stronger gust of wind shook the seat violently. The only thing between me and nothing was the black leather, padded seat. That thought occupied my mind for what seemed like hours. Suddenly without warning the seat itself seemed to drop out from under me. I felt my stomach rise. Then the white, billowing chute opened, and I was on my way down. When I landed, the operator in charge humbly apologized for the two minute delay.

ROGER STEDRON, J. Sterling Morton H. S., '57
Nell Bartels, teacher

FALL MEDITATION

The black silhouette of a bird drifted across the cold fall sky. The sun shone with a concentrated glare peculiar to that time of day between afternoon and dusk. The trees were beginning to lengthen their shadows, as if to implore the delay of sunset.

The tree I noticed was shaggy-barked. The rough-hewn texture of its wood was sidelighted by the glowing disk in the sky. It was wood that was old and worn by the elements. Black shadows filled the scars and tired furrows like a tender healing balm. But they were also shadows of solidity, of permanence. They were the scars and tired furrows of a lifetime. Beneath that rough case, life flowed slowly by in its unending cycle.

The wind caught up a few leaves and tossed them high into the air. It played with them lightly, pushing them and spinning them. And suddenly the leaves were dashed gently to the ground. The wind was one with the season, full of its contradictions. It was bitter, and it was warm; it was lashing, and it was caressing; it was unnoticed, and it was omnipotent.

A whirlwind whipped some leaves into a dizzy spiral at the curb. A bicycle leaned against a rusted lamppost. It was not a new thing. The red paint had long since worn off; only a few dull traces of it still remained. There were no pedals. Its one handlebar was torn and cut. But it possessed a freshness, a brightness that was relieving. For it was the plaything of a child. What difference was it to him that it was not really bright and new; the experiences it brought him were. And in the distance behind the bicycle—that thing of honest simplicity and pleasure—rose a monument to our civilization. Huge in its mass of stone and concrete, it was a viaduct, a symbol over and under which passed the

thousands of petty worries and problems our lives give us each day. It was a symbol of speed and tension and worry.

I turned down a quiet side street, and instantly stepped into a new world. It was a restful street; the noise and symbols were left behind. Along the sidewalk ran a picket fence. As I walked along, the posts clicked silently past, each throwing a soft shadow across my path. An invisible hand seemed to have taken the leaves and dropped them everywhere, creating a mood of peace.

Somewhere a rake scraped and leaves rustled. A thin blue haze dropped through the boughs of the shedding trees. And the air was pungent with the clean, pure smell of burning leaves.

Across the street some people were saying goodbye to their hosts. The words drifted diffusely over the leaves. The man and the wife stood together in the doorway, watching their friends walk off.

A bushy-tailed squirrel leaped across the grass, accompanied by the crackling of leaves. With a powerful arc he flew to a nearby tree, hanging there motionless for a moment, then flashing up the gray trunk to his home somewhere above.

A large oak leaf floated to earth. Suddenly, almost instantly, the sun flashed a mute orange light over everything in sight. The world was aflame with the ending day. But only for an instant. The light began to fail. Quiet blacks spread through the subtle shades. The day was ended. Where, oh where, are those people who can see but the blacks and the whites of life?

MARK FEINGOLD, Evanston Twp. H. S., '55
Mary L. Taft, teacher

THE WISHING STAR

There is an hour of magic between the last rose-tinted shadows of dusk and the deep purple shades of night. When the fading pale gold rays of the sun blend into the violet mist of dark, and the trailing notes of a birdsong float away, the everyday world is transformed into a realm of fantasy. One by one newborn stars are pinned to the sapphire sky. They hang there, shimmering like diamonds against rich blue velvet. It is in this enchanted hour that a wish whispered with all the heart flies to a tiny star and is answered. It is then that dreams come true.

Perhaps you never have danced on white, lacy clouds as I have. Perhaps you never have gathered brilliant stars in your arms and

then, laughing, scattered them on the warm, fragrant winds, watching them fall like crystal snowdrops into the silent pools of eternity. Perhaps you never have thrilled to a beautiful love in the romantic land of make believe.

Before you laugh, listen to my story. You too may remember a wonderful night, long forgotten.

It was a lovely June night, the night of the senior prom. A little breeze, fresh as the air of heaven, stirred the baby leaves of the oak tree and perfumed the breathless world with the scent of roses and honeysuckle. It was the kind of night that makes you all tingly and glad to be alive.

But for me, the beauty of the night was wasted. I was far from happy. All my friends were dancing to dreamy music under a dim, soft light, frothy pastel dresses whirling. I was sitting at home alone, with an aching heart. *He* might have asked me—but he didn't. *He* asked *her* instead. It was hard to keep the tears under my lashes from running, unchecked, down my cheeks.

Slowly I opened the door and stepped outside. I walked across the soft green grass to the old wooden swing where I go when I'm very happy or very sad or when I just want to be alone. I sat there motionless. The only sound was the tuneful creaking of the swing as it swung back and forth, again and again.

Deephearted ruby red roses, elegant, with graceful leaves and long curving tendrils, were entwined around the swing's canopy. In the light of a nearby street lamp these roses, resting in their deep emerald foliage, glowed with a satiny luster. I remember looking at them a long time and breathing deeply of their fragrance.

I leaned back and gazed at the sky above me. The tiny silver and gold stars twinkled in the great range of heavens. One burned brighter than all the others. I made a wish. I do not remember the words now, but then I whispered them with all my heart.

Unexpectedly, it happened! The little star smiled. A cloud of pearly mist that was waltzing through the darkness stopped and descended from above. It enveloped me in scented down, and fashioned a snow-white gown of moon mist, cobwebs, and fairy foam. A shower of fiery stars fell from the sky, splashing stardust everywhere. Some of it clung, sparkling, to my billowing skirt. Some hit in my hair, and some shone in my eyes. Two of the largest stars bounced at my feet and became diamond dancing slippers.

Suddenly a prince stood before me and gallantly bowed and kissed my hand. I do not remember his appearance clearly. Little

things, like the color of his hair or whether his eyes were blue or brown, I have forgotten. I know he was tall though, and graceful, with a majestic stance, and I am sure he was very, very handsome. (Maybe he wasn't a prince at all.)

No, it wasn't just a prince who took me in his arms. It was *he!* Only now, in this magical moment everything was different from before. *He loved me!*

Thrilling, melodious music sounded from far away and swelled louder and louder, rhythmic, throbbing. A thousand violins began to sing, their lyric voices soon joined by the rich strains of cellos and the soaring, dreaming notes of a hundred harps. Soon a great chorus of heavenly instruments sang the enchanting music—music like a curve of gold, haunting and plaintive, but still gay and romantic. It was a melody different from any ever heard before, yet strangely familiar, exciting my breathless heart, making my whole body tremble.

We danced. Round and round we danced. Laughing! Hair flying! Like flower petals caught in a fanciful wind, we danced! Eyes that loved, arms that held me close—these were mine now in this singing hour. We danced on the great white crests of mountains of snowy clouds. We whirled, hearts racing together, down and down and down into the still, black valleys of vast nothingness between the stars. We danced on and on.

Once we saw the reflection of the sun in a clear onyx pool. Fantastic colors of violet, cerise, and orchid, of lime, coral, and gold, and even the palest mauve, rippled and swam noiselessly in the water. Amethysts and topazes displayed their jewel-like splendor everywhere, their brilliance dimmed only by the stars.

The music increased in tempo and became louder and more exciting. He held me so tightly that I could feel his heart throbbing with mine. We danced on and on, close together, wildly like leaves caught in the foaming tide.

Fervently his lips met mine. I wanted that moment of ecstasy to last forever. I wanted time to stand still, nothing ever changing. Desperately, like a lost child, I clung to the silken thread that separated the world of dreams from the world of realities.

But already the music had begun to fade away, softer and softer. We still danced, but slower and slower, away from the heavens, down to the sleeping earth. We stopped. The old wooden swing, now looking crude and ugly in the lamp light, was still there. So were the red, red roses and the emerald foliage. Not all his love could keep me in the magic land forever. For an instant I

was afraid; then I understood. Here was the place I belonged. Carefully he picked a perfect, deephearted rose and placed it in my hand. Then he was gone.

I sat, swaying forward and back in the old wooden swing. My prince, the music of the thousand violins, the gown of moonmist, cobwebs, and fairy foam, were all gone. The clock had struck twelve and Cinderella was once again the maid-beside-the-fire. Even the precious stars were gone, hidden by gray smoky clouds. No, they weren't all gone. One still remained. It was my wishing star. It twinkled. It smiled at me from its home in the misty sky.

I glanced down—and caught my breath. In my hand was a red, red rose! A crystal raindrop fell on a velvet petal and rolled into its smooth bloodred heart. It nestled there against the crimson satin like a rare snowy pearl.

The raindrops fell faster. I sat in a trance, wondering. Had my nervous fingers, in heartbreak and desperation, heedlessly torn the flower from its life-giving stem, or had *he* reverently severed the blossom with strong, gentle hands, and placed it in my outstretched palm? Was this rose a token of our beautiful love? a love now lost, but always unforgettable?

I smiled back at my dear little star just before it was hidden by a silver cloud. Between the falling raindrops I ran to the house, tightly clutching the rose.

PENNY BLACK, Moline H. S., '55
Barbara Garst, teacher

HURRICANE HARRIET

A deathly stillness hung over the island. The wind seemed to hold its breath. Not a leaf stirred. The sea lapped quietly up against the wharves and seemed strangely quiet, as if it were waiting, waiting.

In the east the sky was dark, but far away to the west, a weird yellow light was creeping across the sky. Everything was still, waiting in a breathless hush.

Then it came—wind, harsh and defiant. It tore mercilessly at the tall palm trees, bending them to kiss the ground, uprooting some and laying them side by side. It howled about closed shutters, trying to gain entrance to the small cottages; it picked up waves and threw them angrily at the shore so that they disappeared in a

shower of foam; it whipped around the telephone poles and tore wires from their moorings.

Lightning flashed, illuminating every nook and corner, and rolls of thunder tumbled angrily across the heavens.

Then the rain came, not gentle and nourishing, but drowning and devastating, beating down flowers, flooding streets, and washing out roads. It came in torrents and, with the help of the wind, blew into the cottages through every little crack.

The storm raged on. Only when it had spent its fury did it retreat to the place from which it had come, leaving in its wreckage a proof that it was subject to no man.

PATRICIA SHINSKE, Alleman H. S., '58
Sister Louise, O.S.B., teacher

MY HOME

An old saying has it that "home is where the heart is." It is true, and, oh, how true. With a lot of experience in moving from one place to another, I have found that any place can be made a home if the family put their hearts into it.

My first home was a farm. When I close my eyes, it still stands there in my memory, surrounded by simple, easy-to-raise flowers, a reminder of my childhood experiences. It was the home where I brought the collection of pretty stones which I had assembled while playing on the bank of a river nearby, and where I had run for protection from our rather spirited prize turkey. Here I found comfort and sympathy for a five-year-old's woes. Then we moved; and again, we moved; and still we moved. We moved to avoid the ever-advancing battlefields of World War II. We moved on and on, until now I find myself in Chicago, the continual moving behind me, living in a comfortable apartment and enjoying life as a senior at Sacred Heart. I have different problems now, and they have ever changed with me, since my perplexities on the farm; but I have found, and still find, the same comfort and reassurance at home, wherever it happens to be.

ALDONA OVIZIENIS, Sacred Heart H. S., Chicago, '55
Sister M. Andrea, B.V.M., teacher

“OPEN UP—IT’S THE POLICE!”

Maybe we shouldn’t have listened to that horror program on the radio, where secret police dragged a family off to a concentration camp. Anyway, when the pounding on the door woke up our family, I was practically on my way to some Siberian salt mine.

Sure, my father finally opened the door because I was too scared to move, and there stood McLaren, the night cop on our beat. It turned out to be only a short-circuit fire in our kitchen.

Only a fire? Wow! With McLaren’s help we put it out before any heavy damage was done. Then my mother made coffee and we finally got back to bed. But I couldn’t get back to sleep for a couple of hours. I kept thinking, suppose it had been the secret police! But that was silly. Here in America the police help us, not hound us as they do in countries where people have forgotten what the word “freedom” means.

We pick our own church, our own newspaper, our own candidates. We can own a house or rent one and let our children get a good education in an American school. We drive our own car or take a bus. We can loaf or pick out a good job, help produce steel or automobiles or tanks, or work in a store or a bank.

Freedom of the individual to own property, to work in callings and in localities of his choice, to contract about his affairs, to start and manage any enterprise and profit thereby, to invest in a profit and loss system, and to buy and sell in a free market insofar as this freedom does not conflict with public interest—all belong to us.

I think we’ve become a little too used to the freedoms here in America to appreciate them. I think we should all make ourselves some promises. One is to read further than the sports pages of our daily newspaper. Another is to keep our eyes and ears open for these characters who try to do us out of our freedoms. I’ve been a thinking person since McLaren almost broke down our door, bless him.

DARLENE STOREY, East Rockford H. S., '55
Edna Youngquist, teacher

THE FIRST AMERICAN

Long ago, America was inhabited by an intelligent race known as the Indians. These advanced people had such outstanding developments as no schools, no taxes, and no atom bombs.

The Indians considered themselves vastly superior to the Pilgrims and rightly so, for who were these high-hatted men but a group of underfed immigrants from the wrong side of the ocean? These Pilgrims were also a touchy lot who took offense at the drop of a hatchet.

Among the Indians' contribution to the world of science was a highly-perfected smoke signal system by which messages were relayed.

On windy days, however, a four-page letter looked like a forest fire from a distance. Another discreet form of communication was the tom-tom, used for night letters and messages under three wampum. This useful instrument also doubled as a salt shaker, an oil drum, and a speaking platform.

The Indians were, moreover, brilliant architects. Typical of their genius was the wigwam, an intricate structure requiring three poles and some old canvas. These rustlings were usually erected in low-rent housing areas called villages.

Each tribe had a special name like the Washington Redskins, Milwaukee Braves, or Cleveland Indians. Of course, there were individual names such as Running Nose, Falling Arches, and Sliding Door.

No wigwam was complete without a Hiawatha electric range and an outdoor barbecue pit for Pilgrim roasts. The squaws (*Indianus Femininus*) followed Hatchetface Hines' cookbook to the letter and cooked everything with a layer of dirt for that natural flavor.

The arrest rate was high among the Indians, especially when the Indians were high. Examples of the charges often heard at pow-wows are: intoxication while paddling your own canoe (or anybody else's); walking around with a loaded bow; scalping Pilgrims out of season.

The Indians were a handsome people with year-round suntans and no teeth. Their dress was informal—sleeveless, backless, waistless—in fact, the Indians were the originators of the Bikini bathing suit. They heightened their good looks with subtle make-up in delicate tones of frozen blue, Molotov red, and putting green.

The Indian government was divided into two factions: an investigating committee and a spy ring. The investigating committee investigated the spy ring and vice-versa. The government followed the aggressive policy, especially where the Pilgrims were concerned. Groups of ambassadors and statesmen paid regular visits to Pilgrim settlements and literally killed them with kindness.

The language of the red man portrayed his wit and genius as well as his flair for elocution. The language consisted of three words: ugh, how, and kimcsabe. These three words were all they needed for conversation except for a few prepositional phrases and dangling participles.

Although the Indian population decreases steadily, a few of the species turn up occasionally in front of cigar stores, in the movies, and in the forms of small boys. If you mourn the disappearance of such a fine race, please remember that if they existed today the Indians would be under constant suspicion by certain articulate members of our government for being Red. However, being stealthy by nature, the Indian would probably do a better job of hiding behind the Fifth Amendment than anyone else.

PATRICIA JONES, Bloomington H. S., '55
Maude M. Leonard, teacher

ANNUAL ARTISTRY

Late in the summer when the breezes had begun to change into winds, a brisk northern breeze whisked a large multi-colored maple leaf down through the forests and glens of northern Illinois.

The leaf, swaying to and fro, fluttered across a small tranquil lake and settled gently atop a large building that rested on the summit of a magnificent hill. Suddenly, the leaf's tiny occupant, Jack Frost by name, stepped down from his unusual mode of travel, climbed a nearby tower, and surveyed the campus of this strange castle-like edifice.

Taking one look as he combed his beard back into shape, the little man with a Sherwood green suit and a small peaked hat, exclaimed, "This looks like a good starting point."

Having abandoned his lofty perch, Jack returned to his leaf and using its stem as a rudder, he sailed softly to the foot of the hill.

Taking a palette and a brush from the leaf, he started his yearly job. Mixing the colors in his own inimitable fashion, he covered each leaf on a giant oak with a multitude of red, brown, and golden hues. Only here and there, he left a few green tints to add contrast to his masterpiece.

When each oak in that grove had been perfected with the same precision workmanship, the hilltop's northern visitor completed almost all the trees on the south side of the building. The one

remaining part was a branch hanging right outside the principal's window. After careful thought and study, Jack finished this last bit so that each leaf matched Mr. Biester's drapes.

Feeling mighty proud of his day's work, Jack donned his fur-lined sleeping bag and returned to the crotch of an antiquated elm for his night's rest.

Arising early the next morning from an enjoyable but short slumber, Jack finished the rest of the trees without much difficulty. The only thing which hampered Jack's work that morning was a belligerent woodpecker determined to pick a fight with him. After the fracas, the bird went away not only badly beaten but bedecked with a purple bill!

When every bit of shrubbery surrounding Glenbard had been finished, Jack packed up his tools and sailed away into the west. Thus ended Nature's yearly metamorphosis at Glenbard.

SAM BODMAN, Glenbard Twp. H. S., '56
Helen McConnell, teacher

HONORABLE MENTION

Bloomington: "How Would You Feel?" by George Umbright, and "A Teenager in 2954," by Don Epple (May English); "Black Gold," by Judith Pietsch (Lorraine Kraft); "The Boxtop Era," by Faye Lystad, and "A Man's Struggle for Expression," by Emily Parker (Maude M. Leonard).

Chicago (Immaculata H. S.): "Ducks Hear Call That Says 'Soup's On,'" by Carol Hopkinson (Sister Mary Alician).

Chicago Heights (Bloom Twp. H. S.): "To Be or Not to Be . . ." by Gayle Yanson (Sara J. Fernald).

Cicero (J. Sterling Morton H. S.): "Between Classes," by Therese Martinek (Marjorie Diez); "Morning," by Roger Oeschel (Robert S. Lundgren); "The Meaning of Christmas," by Carol McConaughey (Agnes Vukonich).

DeKalb: "Memories," by Jeanne Rohlik (Mrs. Rutledge).

Downs: "Cows," by Madalyn Romine (Barbara Stuart).

East St. Louis (St. Teresa Academy). "Calvary in China," by Bernice McCarthy (Sister Mary Pauline).

Elgin (St. Edward H. S.): Florence Riedl.

Elgin (Larsen Jr. H. S.): "Let There Be Music!" by Vicky Biggers (Betty Rupp).

Elmhurst: (York Com. H. S.): "Checkerboard of Life," by Ruby Garland (R. M. Leader); "The Night and I," by Jane Salley (Eleanor A. Davis).

Evanston: "ETHS Gallant Galahads Court Lovely Ladies," by Kathy Cook (Marie Claire Davis); "The Sleepless Night," by Martha Garner (Mildred Hudson); "What Do I Want Most for Christmas?" by Martha Schuetz (H. Montgomery); "Cash With a Dash," by Daniel Drobnis (F. Rouse); "A Walk in the Park," by Phyllis Turner (Mary L. Taft); "3:04 Any Afternoon," by Steve Davis (Charlotte Whittaker).

Fairfield: "The Terminal," by Phillip French (Corine Jessop).

Galva: "On Me and Basketball," by Derek Myers (Mildred Lapan).

Genoa (Genoa-Kingston): "Fate's Famous Person," by Sandra Sherman (Gladys Wibking).

Glen Ellyn (Glenbard Twp. H. S.): "Colors Can Change Your Life," by Janet Ellerman (Grace Carlson); "The Best-Laid Plans" by Herbert Menard (Helen McConnell).

Grant Park: "The Torture Chamber," by Lou Anne Hamann (Reta Haldorson).

Harvey (Thornton Twp. H.S.): "Welcome, Stranger!" by Robert Schultz (Ruth Lenoir Russell).

Jacksonville: "Haunting Memories," by Becky Crouse, and "The Greatest Car," by William Cochran (Emma Mae Leonhard).

Joliet: "Whispered Awakening," by Dom Raino (Catherine M. Adler); "The Happiest Angel," by Judy Koten (Mary Ryan).

Kinmundy (Kinmundy-Alma): "Vacation in Colorado," by Kaye Hammer (S. E. Bennett); "A Medley of Melodies," by Madonna Blessing (Ruby O'Dell).

Marengo: "Suspense," by James Graff (Helen Staubli Tipps).

Marywood: "Fourth Birthday," by Carol Sue Riley (Sister Frances Xavier).

Moline: "Pictures in Music," by Pat Hayes (Marjorie Hendee); "The Spell of the Swamp," by Soma Martens, and "I Remember the Morning Glories," by Soma Martens (Robert Knees); "Cold Water!" by Judith Jones (Ruth Toyne).

Naperville: "Why Girls Wear Make-up," by Caryl Geris (Dorothy Scroggie).

Normal (University H. S.): "A Miracle Wrought," by Shirley Hayslip (Verna Hoyman); "The Spell of Autumn," by Jacqueline Reusser (Ruth Stroud).

Paris: "Charles Dickens's 'Heep of Infamy,'" by Joe McCord (Elizabeth Kern); "The Haunting Refrain," by Herbert Farnham, and "Fantasy," by Linda Sunkel (Addie Hochstrasser).

Park Ridge (Maine Twp. H. S.): "The First Hunt," by Dave Taylor (Elizabeth Parolini); "Night Train," by Frank Conlon (Paulene Yates).

Pekin: "Could Any Man Ask for More?" by Donna Crouch (Bernice W. Falkin); "My Creed," by Pat Boyer (Helen Moore); "Nanutaca: Son of Blackhawk," by Leo Dunn (Maureen E. Murphy).

Peoria: "Avarice," by Tom Newmiller (Emily E. Rice).

Plainfield: "The Cue Cumbersome," by Bonnie Herath (Pauline Culbertson).

Rock Island: "Farewell to Dolly," by Vernon George, and "Biography of an Automeris Io Brood," by Thomas Fryxell (Carolyn Pierson Walker).

Rock Island (Alleman H. S.): "What Christmas Means to Me," by Paul DeWilde (Sister Louise); "Alone on the Earth," by Mary White (Sister Mary Carlos); "Safety First Means Long Life," by Robert Bonomie (Sister Mary Ignatius); "The Weapons of Peace," by Jerry Vande Voort (Sister M. Joanna); "Sixteen," by Thomas Hogue (Sister Mary St. Majella).

Rockford (East High): "Room 104," by Eddie Shank (Adele Johnson); "Friends, May I Tell You—" by Susan Lower (Edna Youngquist).

Rushville: "Childhood Ambitions," by Larry Schaefer (Geneva Quinn); "I Was Scared," by Mary Long (Betty Boehm).

Skokie (Niles Twp. H. S.): "Emancipation?" by Carol Berchert (Priscilla Baker); "Dear Mother and Father," by Allan Lange (Doris Tillman).

Streator: "The Big Mix-up," by Dianne Bakalar (Faye Homrig-hous).

Thornton Fractional H. S.: "The Land of Souls," by Judy Kordula (Evelyn Evans).

Waynesville: "The Oversized Pants," by Al Furman (Jo Anne Dittus).

West Chicago: "The Patriarch," by Linda Adamson (Robert Haebich).

West Frankfort: "Blue Lake," by Linda Browning (Velma O. Nave).

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

At its annual meeting in Urbana on October 29, 1954, the Illinois Association of Teachers of English voted approval of the following resolutions:

To improve the high-school English program and the English used by high-school graduates, be it resolved

1. that the primary job of the teacher of English is to teach all students to read and write so that each and every one of them may become an informed, thoughtful, and articulate member of our democratic society;
2. that the English program include a 50-50 proportion of literature and composition throughout the four years in all high schools of the state;
3. that more emphasis be placed on world literature, on propaganda analysis, on critical listening, on clear, effective expression;
4. that a minimum of one short written composition be required in *all* English classes every week; this will of course necessitate reducing the teaching load;
5. that the size of high-school English classes be kept as nearly as possible to a maximum of 25 students so that all students can be given more effective training in spoken and written English;
6. that all teachers of English have training in speech, grammar, and composition as well as in literature;
7. that English teachers give students every opportunity possible to speak before groups—other high-school groups, civic groups, church organizations, etc.;
8. that all high-school teachers of all subjects encourage complete statements in response to recitation questions to give students exercise in impromptu expression;
9. that every teacher of English solicit the aid of his principal in making all teachers of the faculty conscious of the need for better English and in enlisting their cooperation in holding all pupils to the highest possible standards of speaking and writing.

For additional copies or further information write to

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